

# Building Across the Nation

A respected Chicago construction firm expands its presence nationwide

Work is well underway on a 5-story, 168-room Staybridge Suites Extended Stay Hotel that Meridian is constructing in Irvine, California.



This FedEx Ground Distribution Center located in West Palm Beach, Florida, is one of more than a dozen facilities that Meridian has constructed for the company since 2009.

## Meridian Design Build

PRESIDENT  
Paul Chuma

EXECUTIVE  
VICE PRESIDENT  
Howard Green

LOCATION  
Rosemont, Illinois

Meridian Design Build, a full-service construction firm based in the Chicago area, has extended its reach in recent years to serve some of the nation's hottest markets.

The growing firm, which serves the industrial, retail, commercial, hospitality and healthcare sectors, has followed its clients into several high-need areas across the country. The company first began looking at geographic expansion in 2009.

"We had a great team in place when the economy took a turn, and we all pulled together to look for new ways, and places, to find opportunities," says Paul Chuma, President of Meridian Design Build.

Since then, Meridian has completed more than 90 projects totaling over 15 million square feet in Midwest markets such as Indianapolis, Cleveland and St. Louis, and in locations as far away as California, New York, Florida and Texas.

### RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN SUCCESS

The company has relied on strong client relationships developed over time to facilitate its growth. Those relationships are built on a solid track record of delivering every project on time and under budget.

"To a large extent, our geographic expansion has been driven by our clients' needs," says Howard Green, Executive Vice President and co-founder of the company. "An increasing number of companies that we've built for in the Chicago area are asking if we would consider assisting them with projects in other markets."

The company has grown to derive much of its business from repeat clients, many of which work in areas across the nation.

"More than 85 percent of our projects are the result of repeat business or direct referrals from past clients, which is pretty unique in our industry," Chuma says. "Many of the companies that we work with in the Chicago area have a national footprint. Doing well for them here has organically led to opportunities for us to do work for them in other parts of the country."

The firm works closely with its clients to ensure that their needs and objectives are fully understood and consistently met.

"In most cases, our clients have a very full plate running their business or looking for the next development opportunity, so it's extremely important that our team manages their construction projects and communicates with them in a clear and efficient manner," Chuma says.

### EASY ACCESS

The central location of the firm's corporate headquarters provides Meridian with the ability to easily access markets throughout the country.

"Our office is five minutes from O'Hare [International Airport]," says Green. "Getting on flights and traveling to other markets is very easy for us."



Meridian has completed a number of projects in the Indianapolis area in recent years including a 125,000 sq-ft distribution facility for Ferguson Plumbing.

Recent examples of projects completed by Meridian outside the Chicago area include a 225,198 square-foot FedEx Ground distribution center on a 27.2-acre site in West Palm Beach, Florida; a 122,000 square-foot industrial building for Ferguson Plumbing in Indianapolis, Indiana; and a five-story, 168-room Staybridge Suites extended stay hotel in Irvine, California.

### BUILDING THE RIGHT PROJECT TEAM

Another key to the firm's success has been its track record of assembling dependable project teams.

"Our project management group spends a lot of time meeting with and pre-qualifying local and regional subcontractors to get a solid understanding of their capabilities, strengths and workload," says Green.

As the company's national footprint has expanded, it has built a strong network of subcontractors and suppliers that help deliver the level of service and quality that its clients associate with the Meridian brand.

"We spend a great deal of time in meetings with architects, civil engineers and governmental agencies on the front end of every project to ensure that we have a solid understanding of local requirements and standards," says Chuma. "In many cases, we are working in markets that are new and unfamiliar to our clients. In those instances, our full-service approach provides them with the peace of mind that they have a general contractor advocating for them that understands the market and is proactively looking out for their interests."

"We've worked hard over the years to recruit and maintain a team of experienced superintendents who represent Meridian and our clients well on out-of-town projects," Green says. "In markets where labor or site conditions present unique challenges, they are able to moni-

tor quality, drive schedule and troubleshoot day-to-day problems that might otherwise slow progress at the site."

Through this impressive network and close communication between team members, Meridian is able to deliver successful projects, both in Chicago and in other markets.

"Our goal has always been to consistently deliver more than what our clients ask of us," says Chuma. "It's been very rewarding to be able to build on relationships established here to successfully deliver projects in other markets across the country." ■

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